Recusants

Reared as a Roman Catholic, I well remember the history we English Catholics received, initially in my case at a Catholic Preparatory School, about a thief, a bully, a tyrant, named Henry and his descendant Elizabeth Tudor who made England a place where practising Catholics faced the daily fear of persecution, imprisonment and execution. A period perhaps exemplified, presenced musically, by William Byrd's motet *Ne Irascaris Domine*, a part of his Liber Sacrarum Cantionum.

Is that transient history which I was taught relevant today? I believe it is, as one example over so many centuries of how the authority of some potentate, some King or Queen, or latterly some government of some nation-State, with their or its demands, that we, their subjects - their citizens - obey whatever laws and diktats they or it decrees, and thus that our own judgement, our own pathei-mathos, our own beliefs and learning, are irrelevant - or possibly subversive or illegal - compared to their laws and diktats based as such laws and diktats always are on some causal abstraction that they insist is or are necessary for the preservation of the status quo. But which causal laws or diktats always, over centuries, become exposed for what they really are: temporal.

Which is one of the lessons that our ancestral, our human culture of pathei-mathos, [1] teaches or can teach us: that such impersonal, supra-personal, authority with its embedded laws and diktats, does not and cannot, in the time-scale of millennia, endure, and that wisdom lives within us by virtue of our individual life experiences or by such living as can, often against our will and thus contrary to our certitude-of-knowing, presence such a wordless personal understanding.

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1. The culture of pathei-mathos is the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as particular films and documentaries.